



Federal Transportation Briefing

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Surface Transportation Reauthorization

Extension - With the current extension of MAP-21 expiring on May 31, leadership in the House and Senate have submitted two-month bills that would continue transportation programs and funding authorization to July 31, 2015. In the House, HR 2353 is expected to go to the floor on Tuesday, May 19. In the Senate, Majority Leader McConnell has taken procedural steps to advance S 1350, which is described as an extension into July (no text available). No offsets are required for an extension of this length because the Highway Trust Fund could sustain it with no transfers from the general fund.

Long-term – Senator Inhofe and Senator Boxer, chair and ranking member of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, said this week that they plan to hold a June markup session for a six-year bill they are writing. However, the EPW proposal would contain policy language only, and would require funding language from the Ways and Means Committee to come to the floor. So far, there has been no agreement on a way to pay for a longer-term bill. According to the Congressional Budget Office, the Highway Trust Fund would require \$16 billion from the general fund to remain solvent through FY 2016 at current funding levels, with another \$11-\$18 billion needed annually after that.

FY 2016 Appropriations

The House Appropriations Committee reported out its FY 2016 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (T-HUD) proposal on May 13. In general, transportation programs would continue to reflect sequestration (where applicable), with funding at or near FY 2015 levels.

- Highway obligation limitation - \$40.3 billion (authorized level)
- Transit formula grant obligation limitation - \$8.6 billion (authorized level)
- Transit capital investment grants - \$1.9 billion (down from \$2.1 billion last year)
- Airport Improvement Program obligation limitation - \$3.35 billion (authorized level)
- Essential Air Service discretionary - \$155 million (same as FY 2015 but the mandatory amount would go up slightly to \$108.4 million)
- Amtrak operating subsidies - \$288.5 million (up slightly from FY 2015)
- Amtrak capital and debt service - \$850 million (down significantly from \$1.14 billion last year)
- Highway Rail Grade Crossings – by amendment, set-aside increased by \$130 million per year

For the “National Infrastructure Investment Program” (TIGER), the bill lists \$100 million (down from \$500 million in FY 2015). However, the two chambers could compromise on a higher amount, as in the past. Also, the maximum federal share for urban projects would be 50 percent (rural projects would continue at 80 percent federal share maximum).

The proposal could go forward as a stand-alone, or some or all of the appropriations bills could end up rolled together in an omnibus. Also, the possibility remains that leadership will reach an agreement to once again suspend the strict caps contained in the budget. The Senate has yet to propose an FY 2016 T-HUD bill.

Funding/authorization expiration dates:

Sept. 30, 2015 – transportation appropriations (HR 83, T-HUD)

Sept. 30, 2019 - water resource and development programs (WRRDA of 2014)

Sept. 30, 2013 - passenger rail and freight safety programs (PRIIA of 2008)

May 31, 2015 - surface transportation programs (MAP-21 extension, in HR 5021)

Sept. 30, 2015 - aviation programs (Air Transportation Modernization & Safety Improvement Act, 2012)

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